

"Ghost"

Patience Curran, Who It to Go Adopt It



John H. Curran, of St. Louis, the ouija board novelist, poetess and adopted mother of the spirit-guided child, Patience Worth Wee.

ing of a child? In some indefinable way "she"—subconscious personality, phantom of the ouija board, sign or whatever one may determine to call it—as certain actual physical ties. She points, for instance, to the resemblance of hair and eyes. It is a relationship that even the Currans do not pretend to understand; something hopeless to those who stand outside the maze of spiritualism. That "Patience" considers self the spiritual mother is positive—it is also certain she thinks of herself in terms of a flesh-and-blood mother as well! According to her story, as told by Mrs. Curran, "Patience" lived and died a spinster. Mrs. Curran herself is childless. Nothing better can be done than give Mrs. Curran's own explanation of this extraordinary condition of affairs.

"Of course," she said, "the hands of 'Patience' are invisible, and so where they are laid, in guidance or in smiting, often is not discernible. That she is, though the members of our household, having much to do with everything in connection with the raising of the child, I thoroughly believe.

"The times, however, are rare when she has, in so many words, told us what to do. Like a good superintendent, she confines her orders to the times when she is going wrong, and as long as we are going right nothing is said.

"The babe was a weakling at first, and it was often dictated that we would never raise it. Early in its life it had trouble with its food, and the family doctor attempted to lighten its food in order to let it recuperate, realizing the danger of starvation in the meantime. 'Patience' at this moment stepped in and told us it must be 'pap, pap, and more pap!' And when we called in the pediatricist he began right away to fill it up with 'pap,' and it soon got all right.

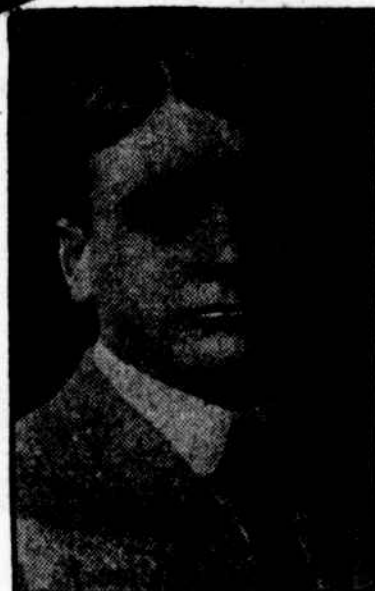
"Another time when some trouble was on, 'Patience' told us to 'herb' it, and when we asked what herb to give she said 'catnip and fennel.' We sent for some, and when the doctor came we told him of it; he laughed as he told us that he had brought a bottle of it along with him for the baby!

"But we have given the child good care physically, mentally and spiritual part of it, the most important part, we are, of course, the most anxious about. Its mentality is positively astounding. At two years of age it is singing songs to a banging accompaniment on the piano and was talking much. At three years it is saying anything it hears and putting sentences together in a startling, original way.



It is by means of the ouija board that Mrs. Curran declares she writes the spook novels, and takes instructions for bringing up the baby just as the spirit of "Patience Worth" dictates to her.

"Since it was two it has said the following prayer, which 'Patience' gave us to take the place of the old 'Now I lay me,' because it has a line which, she said, would frighten the children and that was not right: 'I, Thy child forever, play About Thy knees this close of day. Within Thy arm I now shall creep And learn Thy wisdom while I sleep, Amen.'



John H. Curran.

"I say," she told us one day, "that this wee one is more than a sign for earth to follow, for she hath within her small hand the key that unlocks even the heart of the great God, the key of love.

"The paths of earth are filled up of these wee ones. Wastes, lost loves, lost upon the torrent-swept sea of earth's day without one beam or broken spar to bear up their frailness. Behold, this babe is the very dregs of sorrow, yet now clothed in love, look upon her! Glorified! Oh, ye men! look upon her lips. The purity of God's love is upon them and His heart may be read within her eyes.

"Nothing that contains the fire of Love can be called a poor task, and I say that since those who live on earth are loth to take these babes, then behold, these hands shall lay hold upon flesh and minister unto it, even though no man seeth their working!"

"I have gathered from 'Patience,'" went on Mrs. Curran following these quotations, "that she not only takes the keenest delight in having this child of her own, but she has hopes that the fact of her having adopted it may encourage others to do the same, and thus the little, helpless arms that are now raised to blank ceilings and reach no mothering breast, and the little, weak voices that call for the mother and hear no answering word, may be given at least a mother's love once removed, and thus feed the life of the child and the heart of the one who takes it.

"God shall come to the hearts of earth from out the babes," said 'Patience,' 'for surely since God is in man, he must be renewed to the earth through the coming of babes.

"See," she said one night to a sweet girl who was holding the Wee, 'then knowest the warmth of the bright flame that is kindling within thee at the touch of this wee hand. Wrap thine arms about this wee one'

flesh and let thy love clothe her warm. The earth hath a rich store of love, but the hands of men have locked up the store and it takes the hand of a babe to open it up.'

"From every land and clime have come presents and recognition for the flesh representative of the great teacher of love of God and Christ, 'Patience Worth.'

There have been many prayers from "Patience" to God for her baby, but this one, given upon her christening day, is the fairest of them all:

"Out from the white lilies clothe her. Out from its stored and glistening gold, to give her treasurer. Pluck from the deep blue, the steadfast sky, the opening unto depths that it may be hers. Leave Thou the sun at every dawn to show his light upon the hovering shadows that may show they be but phantoms.

"Yet, leave her woe! Ah, strip her not of this! Make full her cup that she may know Thy heights and depths. Open up her heart and write Thee there no promise of some golden real as price, but write Thy words, and teach her lips to kiss them. Amen."

It will no doubt occur to some to ask why, with "Patience Worth's" exceptional advantages of acquiring all wisdom in the spiritual world, it is necessary to call in a purely mortal physician for the ailments of little Patience Wee. To this Mrs. Curran answers:

"'Patience' wants us to do everything for the baby that we can possibly do without her assistance. This applies also to her physician. There is no daily consultation with 'Patience' regarding her care, clothing or training. Dr. L. C. Stocking, infant specialist, has donated his services to the baby as long as she lives and he is practicing. There has been no serious disagreement between the doctor and 'Patience.' 'Patience' is not consulted as long as the baby seems to be doing well under the doctor's care. No condition has ever arisen when 'Patience' and the physician were at variance."

In fact, "Patience" tells the doctor whenever Mrs. Curran disobeys his instructions. Mrs. Curran liked to fondle the child and could not bear to hear it cry. The doctor thought that a baby ought to cry a certain amount. "Patience" would tell the physician every time Mrs. Curran quieted it.

Again, it was too great a temptation to keep from dressing the baby up, and this was against the instructions of "Patience."

"Patience," says Mrs. Curran, "prefers very plain dress, somewhat on the order of the old Puritan style, sombre clothes of drab and gray, possibly touches of white at the wrist and neck. She wants her shoes amply large and comfortable and is against anything that will



Mrs. Curran giving Little Patience Worth Wee a message from the spirit mother "Patience Worth."

bind the body in any way. The baby looks very attractive in the poke bonnet, pettiskirt, bodice and cape of the old Puritan days. But the temptation is to put on frills."

"Patience" told the doctor about Mrs. Curran's disobedience in these words:

"Thou takest care of the innards of the wee one's, and these here take care of the outards. There are no frills upon the insides, but lawk! The be frills, and ribbons and trumpery on the outard!"

Such is the unique story of the baby, who is being raised by a "ghost." In the situation lies a most interesting possibility which has already served as a theme for several motion picture stories—that is, the development of a child who later becomes the central figure, the priestess, if not the goddess of a religious sect which has grown up around her. Clearly, to those who believe that little Patience Worth Wee is an actual link between the spiritual world and this material world, she becomes a unique personality, a child set apart from others. She provides a nucleus for just such a religious order as, in imagination, the motion pictures have dealt with. Already, as Mrs. Curran says, she has received presents from all quarters of the world.

What is to be her future?